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(15.)

A DECLARATION

Or Testimony given by Captain

ROBERT NORWOOD

Under his hand, (the which was by him publickly read at a meeting in Ab-church before Mr. Shidrack Simpson together with many others;)

April 21. 1651.

Wherein is laid downe his beliefe concerning God, what he is, what Christ is; and what the Spirit is; what the soul is; what the body and spirit of man is; and also his beliefe concerning the resurrection: With certain quere's proposed concerning what the Divell Satan or Serpent is? what Antichrist, the false prophet or dragon is? what the true and very Christ is? Now brought to publick view for clearing of truth, discovering of error, and his own vindication in reference to many unjust and untrue Aspersions cast upon him.

I Do beleeve one God, or one infinite eternal being, which onely or alone gives a being to all things that are, in whom, from whom, and by whom, all things do consist, exsist and subsist, he to be unchangeable or immutable, whose essence and presence is every where, yet comprehended no where, he onely having life in himselfe and is the alone life of all things, whether visible or invisible; in him I verily beleeve there is not the least variation, or shadow of change, for he Is or *I am*: That this same infinite, eternal one hath given a threef-old declaration or manifestation of himselfe in One.

I do farther beleev, according to the Scriptures, the declaration, manifestation or outgoing of this infinit, eternal being in or by the word in infinite wisdome and power in creation, according to that which is written, That by it all things were made, and without it was made nothin that was made; which is also called Christ or the first-borne or onely begotten of the Father, or the Anointed or anoining of God; in which respect, he is said to be the life and light

of the world, as indeed he is, which I stedfastly beleeve; and that this light (as it's written) shineth in the darkneſſe, though the darkneſſe comprehend it not; and that he was in the world, and the world was made by him, though the world knew him not; that became to his own though his own received him not: the ſame CHRIST ſtedfaſtly beleeve to be my onely and alone light and life and ſalvation; and ſo much and ſo far as I have attained him or [illegible] rather he or it, is riſen up or brought forth, it or himſelfe in me, ſo far I judge my ſelfe to live or be alive or ſaved or to have attained ſalvation and no farther: and what ever elſe is in me, I take to be of the fleſh, the devill or darkneſſe, or ſin or hell, antichriſt or of the falſe prophet: for that which is borne of the fleſh is fleſh, and that which is borne of the ſpirit is ſpirit. That this Chriſt, Word, or Son is One with the Father in the Spirit, I alſo ſtedfaſtly beleeve.

I do farther beleeve concerning the Spirit, or Holy Ghoſt as its called, that it infinitely and eternally proceeded from the Father and the Son, and that he is the immediate life and being of all things, and is the alone true witneſſe-bearer to the father and the ſon *John* 5, 6. and neither Father nor Son, yet both Father and Son, not three but One. One intire, ſimple, undivided being in themſelves; whence in Scripture he is called ſometimes the ſpirit of the father or God, and ſometimes the ſpirit of Chriſt, in or by which ſpirit we have communion with the Father and the Son: he in us, we in him are by it made perfect in one, which alſo is more or moſt properly called the ſpirit of truth, or rather the ſpirit which is truth: he onely and alone leading into all truth, or the all of all truth which is God himſelfe.

Concerning that we call man, *Paul* diſtinguiſhes into three: ſoul, body, and ſpirit. The ſoul I take or beleeve to be of the divine eſſence: for it's ſaid, God breathed into him the breath of life, and he or it became a living ſoul: for ſo the Scripture renders the divine principle, ſometimes he, ſometimes it; and indeed, that which is there ſaid to be breathed into man, I cannot conceive to be leſſe or other then his own eſſence or ſpirit, there being nothing but himſelfe, to go forth from and in himſelf unto us: he in his Son by his Spirit, ſtating himſelfe in us though in weakneſſe, called elſewhere his Image or Spirit; as where its ſaid, My ſpirit ſhall

not alway ſtrive with man for that he alſo is fleſh. It's called alſo the ſpirit of truth or which is truth, true holineſſe or truth in holineſſe and righteouſneſſe: which image or life of God in man, is confeſt by all or moſt (if I miſtake not) neither was nor could be totaly or finally loſt, though much defaced as they call it: And truly (as I conceive) there muſt be, and is a perfect truth in every created Creature according to its kind, which is the inviſible life and being of it, the viſibility being onely a repreſentation or figure of the inviſible life and glory, according to that in the *Romans*, That which may be knowne of God, is manifeſt in them: for God hath ſhewed it unto them: for the inviſible things of him, that is, his eternal power and God-head are ſeen by the creation of the world, being conſidered in his workes, to the intent they ſhould be without excuſe. By the God-head muſt be there meant Trinity in Unity & Unity in Trinity; yet every thing in its order, kinde or end, according to what he hath appointed every veſſel to hold forth of himſelf, according to that in the *Corinthes*, where it is ſaid, that there are *bodies* heavenly, and bodies earthly; and that the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another; and that one ſtar differeth from another in glory: yet are all theſe but one in the union, according to that *Paul* ſpeakes in another place, that there are ſeveral gifts and adminiſtrations, yet but one ſpirit, and all by one and the ſame ſpirit; which perfect and inviſible truth cannot be leſſe or other then the divine eſſence: Man carrying the beautious tranſparent ſplendor of the repreſentation in this earthly creation; yet is not God the Creature, nor the Creature God: for we muſt hold God and the created by God for could you ſpeak all the inviſible glories *ſhadowed* or held forth in the whole viſible creation, you could not ſpeake God, for he is all things; yet nothing *He is*; which ſhort word, if truly known and underſtood, ſpeaks him moſt. And indeed, were this light, life, or image of God in man, wholly extinct, man would become more brutiſh then the beaſts; which that it is not, appears plainly to me from that place where it is written, That the Gentiles who have not the law, do the things contained in the law; which ſhew the effects of the law written in their hearts, their conſciences bearing witneſſe, & their thoughts accuſing or excuſing one another.

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For the ſpirit of man or man's naturall ſpirit, It's that if I miſtake not, which is called the Devill, or Satan, or Serpent, or Anti-Chriſt, or falſe prophet, or ſpirit of darkneſſe, or death, or ſinne, or hell, *James* 1. 14, 15. *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own luſt, and entiſed. Then when luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth ſinne: and ſinne, when it is finiſhed bringeth forth death.* Hence Chriſt teſls the Scribes and Phariſees, they *are of their father, the Devil, and his works* they do who was a lier or deceiver from the beginning: hence alſo ſome are called dogs, ſome foxes, ſome wolves in ſheepes-*clothing*: and *Paul* is ſaid to fight with beaſts at *Epheſus*: & Chriſt when tempted by *Peter*, (although a Diſciple,) he calls him Satan: Every one or every thing taking its denomination from the property or quality of that ſpirit which hath the major or moſt ruling power and dominion in and over him or it. It's ſaid, there are legions of divels: & we ſay, there is a covetous devil, an unclean devill, an envious devil, a wrathful deivl and the like. And ſo it's ſaid, there are many Anti-chriſts, no one carrying the whole fountain in him, though each one be from one fountain: ſo on the contrary, no one hath the whole fountain of life or light in him, (if I may ſo ſpeak) but every one in meaſure according to the good pleaſure of him who filleth all in all things. Hence *Paul* ſaith there are babes and ſtrong men in Chriſt: and ſo *John* calls ſome children, ſome fathers, ſome young men: and farther ſaith thus. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that hath righteouſneſſe, is righteous, as he is righteous: he that committeth ſin, is of the devil: for the devil ſinneth from the beginning. For this purpoſe the ſon of God was made manifeſt, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil. Whoſoever is borne of God, doth not commit ſin: for his ſeed remaineth in him and he cannot ſin becauſe he is borne of God. And hence *Paul* alſo, It's not I; but Chriſt in me. And againe, It's not I; but ſin in me. And the Scripture every where comprehends all under theſe two ſtates or termes of light and darkneſſe, the natural man, and the ſpiritual man children of light or life, and children of death and darkneſſe, according to the rule, power or government each ſpirit hath in them. Wherefore it's ſaid, Know you not, that to whomſoever you give your ſelves as ſervants to obey, his

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ſervants you are to whom ye obey, whether it be of ſin unto death, or of obedience unto righteouſneſſe? Againe it's written you who were darkneſſe, are now become light; you who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins hath he now quickned, and tranſlated into the Kingdome of Chriſt: and that we are riſen together with Chriſt; and that he is our reſurrection & glory: and that he hath raiſed us up, and *made us* fit together in the heavenly places or things in Chriſt. And in the ſame 2. to the Ephe. This ſpirit in man is called the ſpirit or Prince that ruleth in the aire, which indeed is an airy, lying notion ſwimming in the head or braine of man, having no foundation or roote in God who is truth, but is alway at enmity with it. We are alſo ſaid to be dead whilſt we live. From all which I conceive, the chief, if not the onely reſurrection pointed unto and intended in Scripture, is our riſing up out of that death and darkneſſe, or hell we were held in or kept under by: or rather Chriſt who is our light, our life, our all in all, ariſing in his owne life, light, power and glory in us. Wherefore it's ſaid, The kingdome of heaven is within you: & when they ſay, lo here, lo there, beleev it not. But I expect not, neither think this will be in its height and full perfection till the ſeparation by that we call death, it be accompliſhed and compleated, not whilſt in theſe earthly tabernacles, not until we have laid off all our earthly garments, and be clothed upon of him who is indeed our true clothings; which made *Paul* ſo grone with deſire thereof: indeed the Saints are unclothing dayly and marvelous unclothings and clothings are at hand.

For the body which is indeed beaſtial, of the ſame nature and ſubſtance with the beaſts, I conceive and beleeve; it alſo ſhall have its reſurrection in its kinde, together with other of the like kinde, according to that in the firſt of the *Corinthes* 15. For to ſpeak properly, nothing dies, that is, annihilated as many do imagine; but is changed from glory to glory: but for the ſoul to be reunited again to this earthly beaſtial body of fleſh blood, and bones after ſeparation, and to live together in ſome one or more place or places, ſome to enjoy eternall happineſſe or ſalvation, and other ſome eternal miſery and damnation; I find no foundation in ſcripture firme enough to build any ſound belief

upon: for Christ saith, In the resurrection there is no marrying nor giving in marriage, but that they are as the Angels in heaven. Then no eating, nor drinking, except of that spiritual rock or *Manna*. Then sure no flesh, blood or bones. And as sure it is, that in no proper or true sence whatsoever can flesh and blood inherit the kingdome of heaven: for it lusteth or is at enmity against the spirit: wherefore I say, this doctrine deserves not only to be exploded the schools, but excommunicated all Churches. For he who maketh or wooketh a ly, shall be shut out of the new Jerusalem; as also he who would sit in the temple of Christ, as if he were Christ, as if he were the true Anointed or Anointing, who will have others to beleeve as he beleeves, for no other reason, but because he beleeves so; forgetting that Christ, as he is the life, so he is the light of every one that comes into the world; & that *none* can come to the Father but by the Son: nor none unto the *Son* but by the Spirit, which 3. are one in the unione.

For farther manifestation and clearing of the truth, I desire in all humblenesse of minde and meeknesse of spirit, in reference to my own and others satisfaction, in a sober & orderly way, an answer to these following quere's.

1. What that Devil or Serpent was, that is said to deceive *Eve*; his, or its nature and property what it is?

2. Whether properly and truly there can be said to have beene, or is, any more then one devil, serpent, Satan or deceiver; though he or it manifest it selfe several wayes, and after divers manners?

3. What the true and very Anti-Christ, or false prophet is; their nature, property or quality what it is?

4. Where the true and proper seate, residence, power or dominion of the devil, Satan, Serpent, deceiver, or Dragon is, or this false Christ, or false prophet is?

5. Whereby, or wherewith they are said to deceive, or wherein the power or strength of their, or it's temptation or deceit lyes?

1. What the true and very Christ is, who is said in Scripture to be the onely and alone light and life of the world?

2. How, and in what sence he is properly, and truly said to deliver us from sin, death, and hell?

3. The true, reall and very ground, cause and end of his sufferings, death or desolution, resurrection, and ascensi-

op; as also his incarnation and interceſſion what they ſignifie or hold forth to us, and how or in what manner or ſence, we are to look upon them, and what uſe we are to make of them, ſince the ſcriptures both old and new are very myſterious, as where Chriſt ſaith, Except ye eat my fleſh, & drink my blood, you have no life in you: and that he was that rock that followed them, and that *Manna* that came down from heaven; And *Paul* ſaith, although he had known Chriſt after the fleſh (which could not be meant of a corporal knowledge) yet henceforth would he know him ſo no more: and he farther ſaith, That Chriſt is the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever?

An anſwer whereunto I deſire on this day ſennit, here in this place before all the people in writing, or elſe ſome other may in love, peace and quietneſſe, have liberty to give anſwer thereunto.

And I do farther declare, what ever man or men, report, accuſe, or charge me with blaſphemy, or any error or errors maintained, countenanced or encouraged by me, or any other thing or matter contrary to or againſt the laws of this Nation, or prejudicial to this State or Common-wealth, and do not duly prove the ſame againſt me, is in the ſight of God and man a ſlanderer, back-biter and murderer: and in caſe any the ſaid crime, or crimes be proved againſt me, I ſhall deſire no favour; but ſhall willingly and readily give up my ſelfe, to undergo and ſuffer what penalty or penalties ſoever by law, is to be inflicted in ſuch caſes without the leaſt partiality.

POST-SCRIPT.

To which *Queres* I could not obtain from Mr. *Simpſon* any anſwer, not ſo much as whether he would, or could anſwer them or no? whether he did leſs then bely or blaſpheme God *before* all the people, I will not, let them preſent judge. And if I prove not him, & the Clergy of *England* generally, who cry out of others for hereſie & blaſphemy, the greateſt deceivers, or falſifiers of the truth, and Blaſphemers (as themſelves call it) in the Nation, let me dy the death.

This I ſpeake not to caſt reproach, diſgrace or obloquie, upon any ingenuous, ſober, quiet, peaceable-minded man or men; but to ſtop the career of that ſpirit, which drives more furiouſly to the ingaging the people more in blood, then

then the Biſhops did, were their power and other advantages anſwerable. Let therefore the moderation of your ſpirits appeare, and judge not leaſt you be judged: for aſſuredly you are guilty of as great, if not greater crimes then other men.

But ſtand ſtill and be quiet in your ſelves, that you may ſee the great ſallvation the Lord is about to bring forth.

Be truly noble, ſearch as the Bereans did the things whether the things be ſo or no.

It were much to be deſired, that the Clergy might once more be injoyned to aſſemble together, to give an account to the people (of whom and from whom they have received and taken ſo much of the ſweat of their browes) what that true very God and Chriſt is that they have ſo long talked of to the people. It may juſtly be ſuſpected from their *preachings* and practiſes, that they have need of a *Paul* to ſhew them what that God and Chriſt is, whom they ignorantly worſhip; leaſt the blind leading of the blinde doth fall into the ditch.

To them all I propoſe theſe quere's, hoping it will not be long before they ſhall receive anſwer under a known hand, they being concerning ſuch points in which they are daily converſant; if not, they muſt give the people leave to ſay, there is little reaſon to continue the wages or ſtipends of ſuch ſtewards, who can give no account of their ſtewardſhip.

Or to beleeve them the true Embaſſadours of God and Chriſt when as they cannot tell us what their Lord and maſter is. Let them then forbear any more to binde the people to their faith and beleefe, ſince themſelves cannot give an account or reaſon of their own faith and hope that is in them. Tell us alſo, O ye ſleepers, where and what your *Hell* and *Heaven* is.

ROBERT NORWOOD.